

# House of Bensons

*A one act drama*

By Darryin B. Cunningham

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## **CHARACTERS**

Angela.....40-50s, female, the mother  
Idri.....40s-50s, male, the father  
Morris.....30s-50s, male, the uncle  
Ella.....30s-50s, female, the aunt

### **THE KIDS**

Will.....18-20s, male  
Jenn.....17, female  
Jade.....18-20s, female

## **TIME/PLACE**

Sometime in the future  
The Benson household

**Scene I**

\*\*\*

*/=someone being interrupted at that moment where the slash occurs*

*//=the lines with two slashes are said at the time*

*Lights rise on the Benson household, Idri and Ella enter in the middle of a conversation.*

IDRI

I can't believe you really told him that. He actually believed you?

ELLA

Every word. I tend to have that effect on men.

IDRI

Oh do you? I'm not so sure about that.

ELLA

Really? Would you like to test my theory?

IDRI

I think I'd rather test something else instead.

ELLA

Ooooo like what?

*(Idri starts grabbing Ella and cuddling her)*

I'm down for this!

*(Just as they are getting intimate, Jenn enters)*

JENN

Aunt Ella?

ELLA

Oh! Hey...

JENN

You and Auntie here alone?

IDRI

What?

JENN

Weird.

*(She exits)*

ELLA

Do you think she/

IDRI

Nope. No way she saw anything.

ELLA

Thank god...

*(Beat)*

So...where were we?

*(She starts to climb on top of him when she notices mail for Idri, she stops.)*

Idri...

IDRI

What? Why are we stopping?

ELLA

Look!

*(Idri notices the mail)*

Were you expecting mail?

IDRI

No...but it's completely normal to receive mail. At least I thought so.

ELLA

No, look closer; Look who its from.

IDRI

*(He pick up the mail and hands it to her)*

Here, you open it.

ELLA

What? Hell no. Idri, that's illegal.

IDRI

That's the reason you don't wanna open it?

(Beat)

All jokes aside, I can't open it Ella. I can't bring myself to open any mail anymore.

ELLA

It's for you. You have to open it.

IDRI

I can't.

ELLA

You can.

IDRI

How?

ELLA

*(She gestures how to open mail)*

Like this...

IDRI

Ella, I'm serious. I can't do this.

ELLA

At least see what's inside.

IDRI

*(Takes the mail and opens it up)*

It's from the private investigator. From two years ago.

ELLA

From when she/

IDRI

Died. Yeah.

ELLA

Well I mean, you have to/

IDRI

No. Nothing on that damn letter is gonna prove anything we don't already know. I'm not reading it.

ELLA

Idri! You have to. If it's from the investigator then maybe he has something of value to offer you.

IDRI

Like what? What could he possibly tell me about my wife that I don't already know? She's dead. She's been dead for a while, and I don't need any confirmation of that.

ELLA

Maybe they found the body? Doesn't that mean anything to you?

IDRI

No, not really. I don't know. I'm not ready. I've already accepted she's gone. I don't need to dig up anything old or anything that could resurrect that feeling. That hole she left. It's healed. No need to rip off the scabs of old wounds.

ELLA

It sounds to me like your scared and I understand. But there's a difference between being healed and being numb.

(Beat)

I'm gonna head out. I'll leave this here with you. It belongs to you.

IDRI

Wait...I want you here with me when I do this.

ELLA

You do?

IDRI

Yes. I'm scared, you're right. And I've been numb ever since she passed. But I've never felt more stable than I do right now. And I

know this is wrong, but it's because of you. This could be the closure we both need.

ELLA

I love you.

IDRI

I love you too.

*(beat)*

Here we go...

*(He opens up the letter from the private investigator and reads it.)*

Oh god...

ELLA

What??

IDRI

No way

ELLA

Idri stop your scaring me. What does it say!?

IDRI

She...

ELLA

What? Did they find the body?

IDRI

She's alive...

ELLA

Idri, don't fuck with me.

IDRI

I'm not fucking with you! I'm sorry. I don't mean to yell, but I wouldn't joke about that kind of thing. You know that.

ELLA

Oh my god...I can't be here.

IDRI

Wait why? Don't leave Ella. Where are you going?

ELLA

Home!

IDRI

Why?

ELLA

Your wife, my husband's sister is alive. This is the last place I should be!

IDRI

We don't even know if this is true. //It could be a prank or a mistake. What if it's not even her? Some letter doesn'

ELLA

//No no no no no! If there is even a chance, we have to take it seriously. IDRI SHUT UP! I can't be here right now.

*(Ella storms out)*



**SCENE II**

*Lights rise on the Benson household a few days later. Revealing Idri, sitting alone. He is holding a framed picture, staring into it.*

WILL

Dad? You okay?

IDRI

Yeah, I'm fine.

WILL

C'mon Dad. You can lie to Jenna and Jade, but not to me. Mom being gone still troubles you doesn't it?

IDRI

No.

WILL

Seriously? Dad don't do that.

IDRI

I'm not trying to do anything. I guess I'm just in my head a bit.

WILL

I just want you to be honest with me. Like before. It's different without mom here, but that doesn't mean our relationship has to change. You aren't wrong for feeling things. Just don't feel the need to hide what you're feeling from me.

IDRI

I'm sorry...We never talked about her after she passed away. I guess I just never thought I would have to confront how I felt or how I feel now. I kept dreaming that I would go to sleep and the world would slow down and make way for her. And that when I woke next, she would be here somehow.

WILL

Yeah... that's rough. You should talk to Jenna. She's been broken up ever since...

IDRI

I've noticed.

WILL

Oh. Well yeah.

IDRI

Yup.

WILL

Okay dad seriously. You've been distant and kinda off the past couple of days.

IDRI

It has been weird lately, I'll admit. The past few days I've been feeling like the ghost of your mother has been here, watching me.

WILL

Well that's silly. You don't have to worry about that. And if mom had a ghost I'm sure she'd be watching over you. Not watching you.

IDRI

I wouldn't be so sure.

WILL

What?

IDRI

Nothing. Don't be out too late tonight.

WILL

How did you..? Nevermindahaha. I'll be back on time. But you do know I'm grown right?

IDRI

That's fine. You can be grown but this is still my house. If you're too grown tonight you'll be sleeping on the front lawn.

(Beat)

Hey!

WILL

Yeah?

IDRI

Be safe tonight.

WILL

I will. Damn dad.

IDRI

Language!

WILL

My bad, ha.

IDRI

Yeah, your bad.  
(Chuckles)

JADE

*(Jade enters through the same entrance Will attempts to leave out of. They bump into each other.)*

Will...

WILL

Jade...

(Beat)

It's good to see you! It's like you're never home anymore.

JADE

HA...HA, like you're one to talk. I've got a plethora of ammo loaded up for you, but I'm not messy, so I'll spare you just this once.

WILL

I appreciate that. I don't want dad's virgin ears to be exposed to my lifestyle choices.

JADE

By "lifestyle choices" you mean sexlife right?

WILL

Yeah pretty much.

JADE

Nothing wrong with a little fun here and there.

WILL

Right? Exactly.

IDRI

You do realize your father is sitting right here don't you?

JENN

*(Jenn Enters)*

We are all grown ups here dad. We can talk about sex like adults.

IDRI

Well hello, little miss Jenny. It's good to see you outside your room...As I was saying/

JENN

/Sex isn't even a big deal.

IDRI

You're seventeen. Don't try to skip that last sliver of childhood, you're gonna miss it. Well, I'm gonna miss it. Sex is definitely a big deal.

JENN

I don't need you to tell me what's a big deal.

IDRI

Relax, Jenny. I/

JENN

/Don't tell me to relax!

JADE

Jenn, dad was just joking.

WILL

/Annnnnnddddd That's my que to leave. I'll see you all, later tonight. Later dad.

JENN

You gonna disappear? Just like mom?

WILL

I'm gonna pretend you didn't say that. See what I mean dad? I swear you're insane.

JADE

//Fucking ridiculous

JENN

//What do you mean?

WILL + JADE

//Whatever.

JENN

//I'm out!

WILL

//I'm leaving.

JADE

//I Can't be here right now!

WILL

//Don't expect me home tonight.

IDRI

*(They all exit, leaving Idri alone again.)*  
Jesus Christ...

### SCENE III

*A week later. Lights come up on the family living room. Jenn, Jade and Will enter carrying bags. Idri enters shortly after, also carrying bags. They enter the living room sharing a laugh mid-conversation.*

JADE

I swear we can never go out without spending money.

JENN

We?

WILL

You mean you! Literally almost all of those bags, are yours.

IDRI

You mean mine. Why is everyone speaking as if I'm not the one who burned a hole in my wallet?

JENN

That's on you dad.

JADE

Yeah, we didn't ask to be born.

WILL

No... but you two did ask for a lot of other shit.

IDRI

Will!

WILL

Yeah? Oh shoot, sorry.

IDRI

Mhmmm. You kids go put all these bags away. I'm gonna order us some grub.

JENN

Order huh? Is that cause you can't cook?

IDRI

Yes.

*(The kids exit. After a beat, the phone rings.)*

Hello? Yeah...We actually just got home. Right now? Sure, ummmm...just give me a few minutes to straighten up the/

MORRIS

*(Idri is interrupted by a knock on the door. He opens it and in walks Morris and Ella.)*

Hey Idri...

*(Morris takes off his hat and Ella closes her umbrella)*

Where are the kids? Downstairs?

IDRI

Yeah...guys, what's up?

ELLA

We've got something we need to discuss with your family.

IDRI

My family?

ELLA

Yes.

IDRI

Why not just me? I can explain whatever it is to them later.

ELLA

They need to hear this.

IDRI

And they will. From me. Why does it matter who tells them Ella?



MORRIS

This is serious...She's coming home.

IDRI

And by she you mean...

MORRIS

Yes. Your wife, my sister.

IDRI

No way...

MORRIS

Way. In fact...She's already here, in Washington I mean. If she gets cleared, she could be home as early as tomorrow.

IDRI

Oh...you can't tell my family that!

JENN

*(The kids enter.)*

Tell your family what?

*(Idri looks at the kids but remains silent.)*

What dad?

ELLA

Your mother...she's coming home.

IDRI

Ella!?

JADE

You're joking.

JENN

Mom is alive?

MORRIS

//You haven't told your kids?

JADE

//Dad you knew?

WILL

//Dad, what the hell is going on?

ELLA

//Yes he knew! And Idri, they deserve to know. You need to prepare your family.

IDRI

Okay okay, everyone calm down!! Since Angie disappeared, I've been missing a part of me that allowed me to function. Finding out she was alive was like...like having your memories flood back into your mind, after years of amnesia. And ever since I found out she's alive, it's like I've had eyes watching my every move. I know it sounds crazy, but I can feel her. I was so convinced she was dead, I never needed to look further into it. If a private investigator couldn't find her, surely she was gone forever. At least that's what I thought. My whole world was turned upside down when I lost her and It's not just gonna fix itself like some fucking magic trick. I've been slowly deteriorating, with each moment. I was trying to find a way and a time to tell them, so excuse the fuck out of me if I haven't exactly mustered up the strength to tell my children their dead mother isn't exactly dead!

*(Sobbing)*

I don't know what I'll do If I see her.

ELLA

When you see her. Idri I know this isn't easy for you, but you aren't alone with everything you go through. Your kids needed to know and I'm sure they have strong feelings about it just as you do.

*(Ella grabs his hands)*

This is your family and they are gonna need a strong presence in their life to help them through tough times. This is one of those times. I'm sure you know this already but/

MORRIS

What's going on?

ELLA

Relax Morris. Idri just needed to be uplifted a bit. They all do.

MORRIS

And that's your job?

ELLA

It's all of our jobs to uplift each other. That's what families do.

WILL

Yeah. That's what families do. Huh. I guess I get that. Dad, I don't know how to feel. What I do know is that mom is alive and this is gotta be blessing right?

JADE

She's our mom and we've been torn apart since she left. But I can't imagine what it's like to lose the love of my life. Dad your stronger than you think. I can't believe she is alive...I forgive you dad.

JENN

I don't.

MORRIS

Okay, we gotta get be going now.

ELLA

I'll be in touch! Idri, you and the kids should call every once in a while.

IDRI

You haven't heard? My kids are grown. I'm not responsible for them calling family members anymore haha. We will definitely be in touch.

ELLA

Bye now!

*(Morris and Ella exit)*

JADE

Seriously Jenna?

JENN

What? I'm just being honest.

WILL

What the hell was that? Dad spilled his heart out and you have zero sympathy?

IDRI

It's okay you guys. I get it.

WILL

It's not okay dad.

JADE

You think it's cool just to go against everything dad says. But really, that shit is annoying. It really shows how immature you are.

JENN

I'm being immature? You two are the ones who just found out your dead mother is alive and you are acting like it's completely normal. Am I the only one mind boggled by this? How can you just forgive him? He knew and never said anything. I can't pretend that doesn't hurt me.

IDRI

I'm sorry. I should've told you, all of you. But your mom being gone/

ANGELA

*(A knock on the door interrupts Idri)*

Hey...I'm home.

**SCENE IV**

*A few days have passed. Lights rise on Angela sitting alone. She is muttering and mumbling to herself, while the kids watch her from a distance hiding. They begin "whispering" to each other.*

JADE

What is she doing?

WILL

I'm scared...Who the hell is she talking to?

JENN

Herself maybe? Why don't we just go ask her? It's not like she's some random stranger, she's our mom.

JADE

You're right. Lets just talk to her.

JENN

Mom?

JADE

(Pause)

Mom?

ANGELA

Oh, hey.

WILL

You okay?

ANGELA

Yeah. You guys are silly. You don't need to worry about me. I'm doing fine. Just not quite use to this feeling yet, but I'm okay...promise.

JENN

Mom...I missed you so much. When I heard what happened I thought we/

ANGELA

/I don't wanna talk about what happened! Sorry; I don't mean to yell, it's just that sometimes I'm a little...I don't wanna talk about what happened. Not quite ready for that yet.

WILL

Well it's only been a few days. I'm sure you'll warm up to the house again. I'm really glad your back mom.

*(Begins to exit)*

ANGELA

Where are you going??

WILL

Just to my homies house. Don't worry I'll be back tonight. You sure you're doing okay?

ANGELA

I'm fine.

WILL

Okay. I'll catch up with you tonight.

*(To his sisters)*

Byeeeeeeee losers!

JADE

Byeeeeeeeeee scrub!

JENN

Hope you come back never!

ANGELA

So, girls. How are you two? I know it's been years since we've...umm,I wanna know everything that's going on!

JADE

Where do we even start Jenn? I guess the house has been a lot more quiet. We've been wanting to put our heads together and move out but times are hard. Shits been getting real lately.

ANGELA

Language! I know your dad doesn't let you all talk like that.

JENN

Ohhhh but he does. All the time.

ANGELA

Sooo, what's been going on with you Jenn? You and your sissy are planning on moving out soon. What's else is new?

JENN

Well until I turn 18, moving out isn't even a option. And 'idk' mom what's new with you? Everything seems new to me right now. So I don't really know how to answer that. What about you? You doing fine? You see how weird this is? You can't just do this. It's not normal so we can't just pretend it is.

ANGELA

I'm doing okay actually. And I'm sensing a bit of hostility and I'm not sure I'm okay with that. I've missed some vital time in your life sweetie I get that, but I've only been here a few days. Please, don't push me away. I missed you. Both of you girls.

JENN

You are so full of it. Everything was new when you left. Just like everything is new now that you're back. I thought you being here would fill the hole left in my heart. There's a gaping absence in this family. I don't know what it is, but there is some void we can't just ignore. I wanna be happy you're home, but something isn't right. Maybe it's because you and dad

haven't been the same or whatever but, you aren't how I remember!

JADE

Oh geez...

ANGELA

Jenn, I can't express to you enough how much I missed you all. I love you sweetie. Me and your dad have things to work through I'm not gonna lie, but we love you all the same and I'm so sorry I couldn't be there for you. I thought of you everyday. Sweetie I'm sorry.

*(Jenn runs to her and hugs her)*

It's okay, It's okay Jenn.

JENN

I love you.

ANGELA

I love you too.

*(Jenn exits)*

JADE

Well...

ANGELA

That was tough. She's always been hard on me.

JADE

I beg to differ. You should see how she treats dad.

*(Beat)*

Hey mom, I'm gonna head to the store. Do you need anything?

ANGELA



I'm good, thank you hun.

JADE

Of course. And uh, don't worry about Jenn. It's just growing pains. She's been acting out since you...yeah. I promise, She'll come around. Try to get some rest...better to rest now before dad gets home. Bye mom!

ANGELA

Bye.

*(She begins to mutter and mumble to herself a bit. Then abruptly stops and stares into the unknown with a creepy focus. As she stares a smile starts to grow on her face. Idri enters.)*

IDRI

Angela...Angela! What are you staring at?

ANGELA

Nothing, sorry. My mind is just all over the place I guess. So I heard you let the kids just swear and cuss whenever they please.

IDRI

That's a damn lie!

*(Angela gives him a look.)*

I mean darn. I don't let them swear or curse at all.

ANGELA

I know, Idri. I'm only joking. I missed you, you know?

IDRI

I missed you more. Everything felt off without you here Angie, I still can't believe you're here.

ANGELA

And now I'm back, and everything still feels..."off" doesn't it?

IDRI

I didn't say that.

ANGELA

You didn't have to. Your daughter did and I knew the second she spoke those words that they were rooted in your ignorance.

IDRI

Damn it Angie. That's just how she is that has nothing to do with me.

ANGELA

Then why haven't you denied that things are still "off"? It's cause you feel that way...don't you?

IDRI

I'm sorry. I just didn't expect you. Morris told me I had a day or so to prepare for your arrival. I didn't get that time so yeah, everything felt a little off.

ANGELA

Oh sorry I didn't give you enough time to prepare for me! What kind of shit is that Idri? You shouldn't need to prepare for your wife. I'm your fucking wife. I tried to do something sweet and get here early and surprise you all and everyone is piercing me with dirty looks from the first second I come home. No smiles, no hugs, besides Jenn actually. You acted as if you seen a ghost when I came home.

IDRI

That's not true Angie, I was just surprised to see you.

ANGELA

You were more surprised than happy. Sorry I didn't give you time to get your girlfriends shit out the house or to fix up our bedroom so it actually looks like I live here, I mean Jesus! I'm gone for couple years I get it. Did you think I would never come back Idri?

IDRI

I didn't know. I really had no idea if you'd ever come home. They told me you were dead Angie. Dead! And I didn't wanna keep staring at all the things that reminded me of you. I had to move past my grief somehow and keeping all of your...essence and memories around me, was like chaining myself to my past. I couldn't be in darkness forever. I can't afford that. The kids needed me and I had to step up and be both parents because you weren't around.

ANGELA

That's not fair. That's not fair. That's not fucking fair and you know it Idri!!

*(She tries to hit him, he grabs her and holds her while she sobs)*

IDRI

You're right. I'm sorry. I've just been so worried about you. And I talked to the doctor and he said/

ANGELA

/Please, don't talk to me about what the doctors said. I had so many specialist and professionals in my head I feel like I can still hear them. Their words and countless techniques...still ringing in my ears. I can't have them be part of my reality anymore Idri. I'm ready to move on.

IDRI

So, what happened to you out there?

ANGELA

I told you, I'm ready to move on.

IDRI

Are we never gonna talk about this? I mean shit...I'm really trying here but you aren't exactly making it easy. Angie I barely recognize you. And that scares me.

ANGELA

Maybe that's because you've replaced me.

IDRI

Excuse me?

ANGELA

You heard what I said.

*(Idri heads out to exit, stopped only by Angela's words.)*

Where are you going?

IDRI

Out. I just need to get some air. I'll be back soon.

**SCENE V**

*(A couple of weeks later. Angela begins searching through the house. Tossing things all over the place and scrambling around the house. She finds Idri's work bag and begins searching through it. She grabs his work phone and opens it up and begins reading messages.)*

"It was good to see you again tonight."

"Sorry I've been MIA for a few weeks. Things have been busy at work and at home."

"Soon we can be together."

What the hell!

"I love you sweet pea..."

No...no, no,no,no no!!!!

*(Angela sits down,waiting for Idri to get home from "work". As he walks in she begins speaking without looking back at him.)*

ANGELA

You're home late.

IDRI

Yeah sorry about that. Had to put in some overtime hours this week.

ANGELA

Overtime huh?

IDRI

Yes overtime. What's going on? What are you doing up so late? I figured you'd be slee/

ANGELA

/One question at a time "sweet pea".

IDRI

You okay babe?

ANGELA

I'd be more okay if people would stop fucking asking me that.

IDRI

Woah, what's going on?

ANGELA

I'll ask you once and that's it.

IDRI

Okay?

ANGELA

Did you sleep with my brothers wife?

IDRI

What?

ANGELA

Ella! Did you sleep with her?

IDRI

Why would you even/

ANGELA

/Idri...don't fuck with me. Did you or did you not sleep with her?

IDRI

...yes

ANGELA

Okay, that's all you had to say. Everything fine. See what honestly gets you? Everything's fine. We're okay right?

IDRI

I hope so.

ANGELA

We're okay.

*(Sobbing)*

Why?

IDRI

Angie, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to it just happened. And then we had this connection and I couldn't find a way to get myself out of this loop. Eventually I just got trapped in the habit of foolishness. Stupid, I know. Just the thought of it makes me sick I'm sorry. I don't know what else to say.

ANGELA

You don't have to say anything. Just leave. Don't look at me or touch me or talk to me or my kids. Just leave.

IDRI

Your kids? You can't be serious. It's been years and we're doing this? Right now, when our kids need us both!

ANGELA

They don't need you. I needed you. But not anymore. So I'll ask nicely one last time. Idri, please leave this home and never come back.

IDRI

No... I can't leave. I'm sorry but, this is my home too.

ANGELA

If you don't leave this house I swear you will need God himself to come and save you from the wraith and rage I have built over the course of ever being with you. I've been kind and patient and loving to you and your family but I can't take a single second of your shit anymore!!! We live in your world with your rules and it's all about your life. But I'm done. I'm done being invisible and I'm done being treated like your slave. You've been so involved in your own life, I had to try to take my own life to get you to notice me!!

*(Beat)*

Shit...

IDRI

Wow...is that? Wow. Shit Angie. I'm sorry.

ANGELA

Please just leave. It doesn't matter how or why anymore. It doesn't matter what you say. It's just in your nature to be deceitful and sinful and regardless of why or what happened I still want you out! So please, leave. I don't wanna have to hurt you. In fact, I don't wanna hurt your kids either. You should take them with you.

IDRI

Oh now there my kids?



ANGELA

Yeah, your kids.

IDRI

You gave birth to those kids!

ANGELA

For you. I didn't ask for children. And I never wanted them either!

IDRI

This isn't you. You're lashing out. You're just having a bad reaction to the treatme/

ANGELA

/NO! Don't try and diagnose me, this is me. Please leave and take those kids with you!

IDRI

Okay.. I'll leave. But I'm not taking the kids. They love and need you. More than anything else right now. And I can't leave without telling you how I feel. Angie, I'm sorry. And I admit I...I crossed the line. I crossed so many lines but I never thought I'd be able to see you again. They told me you were dead. That investigator looked me in the eyes and my world shattered. I had to pick up a million tiny pieces and try to create a new life out of what was left. I...I thought I lost you. Do you understand that? I thought you were gone forever and I had to reinvent myself. From top to bottom. Ella wasn't anything special. I'm sorry it happened to be her. It was really unfortunate but damn it, it would've been someone else later down the line.

ANGELA

Is this suppose to make me feel better?

IDRI

I don't know. I'm just trying to be honest. Angie you are my world. Every other woman ceased to exist when I met you. Angie, I love you.

ANGELA

If this is all true, why were you with Ella tonight?

IDRI

To tell her that me and her can never be. Angie you make me fly. When we are connecting and spending time, that's us flying. When you go into your studio and paint. That's you flying.

ANGELA

And the way you work...to make sure everything and everyone is okay. That's you flying. Idri, I'm so sorry. I haven't been myself. But I've missed you. I've missed my kids, my life. I had to fight and there was no way in hell I was gonna be lost forever.

IDRI

I don't deserve you.

ANGELA

You don't. But there are moments when I don't deserve you either. Who's to say anyone deserves anyone? I know things are hard right now, but you know what we all deserve? To fly and we will. We've always been strong and better together. Even if it took, a bit of a detour. The love I have for you and our kids...it transcends this world. It's how I know God exist.

IDRI

I've missed you...

ANGELA

I've missed you too.

*END OF PLAY*